

Message Text

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21

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 SAI-01

SAM-01 /059 W

----- 037368

R 260956Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7722

DIA WASHDC

INFO CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

COMUSTDC TAIPEI TW

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USLO PEKING

C O N F I D E N T I A L TAIPEI 7611

NO FOREIGN DISSEM

DIA FOR AH-3

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

COMUSTDC FOR J-22

JOINT STATE/DAO CABLE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINR, PINT, TW

SUBJECT: ANOTHER CHIANG ON THE POLITICAL SCENE?

1. SINCE CHIANG WEI-KUO'S (5592/4885/0948) PROMOTION TO FULL GENERAL AND APPOINTMENT AS COMMANDANT OF THE ARMED FORCES UNIVERSITY (AFU) IN AUGUST 1975, HE HAS RECEIVED INCREASED PUBLICITY IN THE LOCAL PRESS AND HENCE MORE PROMINENCE THAN HE HAS ENJOYED IN SOME YEARS. MOST OF THIS RESULTED FROM A SERIES OF APPEARANCES HE MADE BEFORE
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LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS INCLUDING THE LEGISLATIVE YUAN. HIS

SPEECHES GENERALLY REFLECTED THEMES WHICH WE HAVE ALSO HEARD RECENTLY FROM SOME CHINESE ARMY OFFICERS (SEE SEPTTEL) AND WHICH ARE NOT PURELY MILITARY IN CONTENT: (1) THE COMMUNISTS CANNOT BE TRUSTED AND WE HAVE TOLD YOU (THE U.S.) SO; (2) TAIWAN IS VITAL TO U.S. SECURITY.

2. GENERAL CHIANG'S LACK OF MEDIA ATTENTION HERETOFORE MAY POSSIBLY BE A REFLECTION OF HIS PERSONAL WISHES BUT, MORE PROBABLY IT IS THE RESULT OF DIRECTION FROM HIGHER AUTHORITY. THE WIDE MEDIA COVERAGE OF HIS ACTIVITIES--EXCEEDING THAT GIVEN TO HIS PREDECESSOR AS AFU COMMANDANT--STRIKES US AS A LITTLE UNUSUAL.

3. ALSO, IN NOVEMBER, GENERAL CHIANG MADE A WIDELY PUBLICIZED TRIP TO JORDAN--HIS FIRST KNOWN TRIP OVERSEAS SINCE A VISIT TO KOREA IN MAY 1972. THIS VISIT, ASIDE FROM ITS RARITY AND THE PUBLICITY IT ENGENDERED, IS INTERESTING BECAUSE CHIANG ONCE TOLD THE ARMA (IN OCTOBER 1974) WITHOUT ELABORATING THE REASONS, THAT HIS HALF-BROTHER, PREMIER CHIANG CHING-KUO, WOULD NOT PERMIT HIM TO LEAVE TAIWAN.

4. CURRENT EVALUATIONS IN THE EMBASSY'S FILES OF CHIANG WEI-KUO (CWK) OFFER CONFLICTING CHARACTERIZATIONS OF THE MAN: 1) HE IS A DILETTANTE, NOT TOO BRIGHT, AND HAS LITTLE INFLUENCE; AND 2) HE IS AN INTELLIGENT, ENERGETIC, COMPETENT TROOP COMMANDER WHO IS POTENTIALLY INFLUENTIAL WITHIN THE MILITARY. THE RECENT ATTENTION GIVEN TO GENERAL CHIANG TENDS TO SUPPORT THE SECOND CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTS THAT HIS STAR IS ON THE RISE WITHIN THE GROC. DESPITE THESE PLAUDITS, WE HESITATE TO REACH SUCH A CONCLUSION. HOWEVER, SINCE CHIANG HAS BEEN RATED SO LOW FOR SO LONG AS A POTENTIAL LEADER, THE CURRENT MEDIA EMPHASIS SUGGESTS WE SHOULD TAKE A SECOND LOOK AT HIM.

5. AN EXTREMELY POPULAR COMMANDER OF THE ARMORED FORCES FROM 1959 TO 1963, HE WAS REASSIGNED TO WHAT MOST VIEWED AS RELATIVE OBSCURITY AS COMMANDANT OF THE CHINESE ARMY COMMAND AND GENERAL STAFF SCHOOL FROM 1963 TO 1968. FROM 1968 TO 1975, HE MOVED INTO WHAT WAS VIEWED AS EVEN GREATER OBSCURITY AS DEPUTY COMMANDANT OF THE ARMED FORCES UNIVERSITY
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AND CONCURRENTLY COMMANDER OF THE NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE. ASIDE FROM GENERAL COURSES AND LECTURES IN THE VARIOUS SERVICE COMMAND AND GENERAL STAFF SCHOOLS AND THE WAR COLLEGE, IN RECENT YEARS HE HAS PERSONALLY DIRECTED THE "GENERAL'S COURSE" GIVEN TO YOUNGER GENERAL OFFICERS. THEREFORE, ALMOST ALL YOUNGER CHINESE GENERALS (GRADUATION FROM THE WAR COLLEGE HAS BEEN A PREREQUISITE FOR PROMOTION TO GENERAL IN RECENT

YEARS) HAVE COME UNDER HIS TUTELAGE. TO MOST SENIOR FIELD GRADE AND YOUNG GENERAL OFFICERS, HE HAS THE STATUS OF "HSIAO CHANG" (LITERALLY, A SCHOOL PRINCIPAL, BUT ALSO A RESPECTED TEACHER AND ADVISOR).

6. DESPITE THIS EXPOSURE, GENERAL CHIANG REMAINS AN ENIGMA, PARTICULARLY WITH RESPECT TO HIS RELATIONSHIPS IN THE MILITARY: SOME WILL ATTEST TO HIS POPULARITY AND THE WIDESPREAD RESPECT IN WHICH HE IS HELD BY HIS MILITARY COLLEAGUES; OTHERS, TO HIS LACK OF INFLUENCE AND WIDESPREAD UNPOPULARITY. HIS RECENT PUBLIC ADVOCACY OF POSITIONS HELD PRIVATELY BY SOME HIGH-RANKING OFFICERS SUGGESTS HE IS ACTING AS A (PERHAPS SELF-APPOINTED) SPOKESMAN FOR THIS GROUP AND TENDS TO LEND CREDENCE TO THE MORE FAVORABLE ASSESSMENT OF HIS WORTH, OR IT MAY SIMPLY REFLECT HIS SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH SOME OFFICERS, AT LEAST WITHIN THE CA.

7. IF PREMIER CHIANG WERE TO DIE SUDDENLY, CHIANG WEI-KUO AS THE SECOND SON OF THE LATE PRESIDENT IS AN OBVIOUS CANDIDATE TO FRONT FOR A MILITARY-DOMINATED COALITION. HOWEVER, WE WOULD NOT NOW (AND MOST PROBABLY NOT IN THE FUTURE) CONSIDER HIM TO BE ANY KIND OF A THREAT TO HIS HALF-BROTHER. NONETHELESS, HIS FAMILY AND MILITARY CONNECTIONS, CURRENT POSITION AND MEDIA ATTENTION SUGGEST HE IS A MAN WHO WILL CONTINUE TO BEAR WATCHING.
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